



PRESS RELEASE

# Governor Baker Swears In New Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning

Group of education and business leaders will develop recommendations to increase online learning opportunities for Massachusetts residents

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Governor Charlie Baker | Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

James Peyser, Education Secretary

Governor's Press Office

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**BOSTON** — Governor Charlie Baker today swore in members of his new Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning, a group charged with developing recommendations to expand online learning opportunities for Massachusetts residents seeking skills for in-demand fields.

Governor Baker announced the new Commission last fall during the “Governor’s Online Digital Learning Summit,” which brought together businesses and higher education institutions to announce new partnerships around online and competency-based learning. The event was held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Governor’s [Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning](#) is a 20-member board — made up of employers, higher education leaders, online education providers and entrepreneurs — brought together to find ways the state can partner with industry and higher education institutions to make post-secondary learning opportunities accessible and affordable, especially for disconnected youth and adult learners. The commission will look at replicating promising practices, such as competency-based

education, prior learning assessments, stackable credentials and customized employer-higher education training partnerships.

“This Commission is charged with finding more opportunities for the Commonwealth to expand online learning and competency-based curriculums, so that Massachusetts continues to be a national leader in transforming education,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “This diverse group of professionals will aim to find better, more affordable ways for people of all ages to get the skills, training and experience they need to find good-paying jobs in our state.”

“This new Digital Learning Commission will provide opportunities that increase access to more affordable higher education degrees and professional certificates,” **Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said.** “We appreciate the work this Commission will do to help address the varied and changing needs of students and employers.”

“For many disconnected youth and adult learners their needs are not being met by the traditional higher education model. Their lives, jobs, families, make it impossible to attend classes full-time on a college campus,” **Education Secretary James Peyser said.** “Online and competency-based education promises to serve students who aren’t being well-served today by changing the delivery model.”

The Commission is being organized and led by Commonwealth Corporation, Massachusetts’ public-private corporation that focuses on workforce, youth, and economic development and executes workforce programs in partnership with businesses and educators.

“Employers are clear: the biggest impediment they have to expanding their businesses is finding the talent they need to fill the jobs they have,” **said Commission Chair J.D. LaRock.** “Our Commission will be laser-focused on expanding innovative education and training options that get Massachusetts residents into those jobs quickly, effectively, and affordably.”

Click [here](#) to see more photos.

## **Members of the Digital Learning Commission:**

### **J.D. LaRock, Chair**

Dr. J.D. LaRock is the president and chief executive officer of the Commonwealth Corporation, Massachusetts’ public-private corporation dedicated to workforce development, youth development and economic development. Previously, he served as Chief of Staff to the President of Northeastern University. From 2011-2012, Mr. LaRock was a Senior Analyst and Manager at the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, France. Prior to that, he was a Policy Director in the Executive Office of Education and Senior Education Advisor to Senator Ted Kennedy. A scholar of

higher education policy, Dr. LaRock is Professor of the Practice in Northeastern University's Doctor of Law and Policy Program, co-editor of *Special Education for a New Century*, and editor of the OECD publication *Education at a Glance*. He is a member of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and Chair of the Board of Trustees at North Shore Community College. He holds a B.A. in Government from Harvard University, an Ed.M in Education Policy and Management and Ed.D in Education Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a J.D. from Georgetown University. Dr. LaRock lives in Beverly with his wife, Christina, and their daughter

### **Linda Boff**

Linda Boff is the chief marketing officer for General Electric (GE), spearheading several major divisions of the company including global marketing, brand, content, digital, sponsorship and customer experience. She is also GE's vice president of Learning and Culture where she leads the company's learning and development work. As one of the most influential CMOs in the realm of digital media, Ms. Boff brings a digital-first strategy to GE's learning and development model for 300,000 employees around the world and was named 2017 AdWeek Grand Brand Genius for her work in transforming GE's public image. Prior to her current role, she was GE's Executive Director of Global Brand Marketing, and before that she served as CMO of iVillage Properties, which is part of the NBC Universal. Ms. Boff joined GE in 2004 as leader of employee marketing after 18 years in the industry, holding several senior positions at Citigroup, the American Museum of Natural History and Porter Novelli. Ms. Boff is a 2016 Matrix Award winner, Chief Digital Officer Club's 2016 U.S. Chief Digital Officer of the Year and #5 on Business Insider's list of the 50 Most Innovative CMOs. She serves on the Board of Dunkin' Brands Group, Inc. and is executive vice president for the Partnership with Children. She earned a B.A. in political science and psychology from Union College.

### **Jennifer Davis Carey**

Dr. Jennifer Davis Carey is the founding executive director of the Worcester Education Collaborative, an independent organization working to ensure that students in the Worcester Public Schools are given the opportunity to succeed at the highest possible level. Before joining the Worcester Education Collaborative in 2010, she worked as the senior director of training, education, and dissemination at Commonwealth Medicine. Dr. Carey served as the Secretary of Elder Affairs in both Governor Mitt Romney and Governor Deval Patrick's Administrations. Before joining Massachusetts state government, Dr. Carey worked at Ohio University, Harvard University and at Bancroft School in Worcester. Dr. Carey is also the founding director of the Initiative for Engaged Citizenship, a nonprofit organization that provides educational workshops on public policy processes of local, state and federal governments. She was a recipient of the Women Making a Difference Award from the UMass Boston Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy and the Pioneer Institute awarded her the Better Government Award for the Supportive Housing Program. Dr.

Carey holds a B.A. in Psychology, M.A in Education, and Ph.D. in Education from Harvard University. Dr. Carey resides in Worcester, Massachusetts.

### **Susan Cicco**

Susan Cicco is the chief human resources and communications officer for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, where she oversees all Human Resources functions and services for 7,500 employees. Prior to that, she was the senior vice president, chief of staff, and head of strategic communications at Massachusetts Mutual Life from 2014–2017, and Vice President and Chief of Staff to the Chairman, President, and CEO from 2009–2014. Ms. Cicco has been with MassMutual since 1993. She holds a B.S. in Business Administration and Actuarial Mathematics from Bryant College. Ms. Cicco resides in East Longmeadow, MA.

### **Joanna Dowling**

Joanna Dowling is the president of the Center for Manufacturing Technology (CMT) at the Custom Group, Inc., a full-service hands-on training facility located in Woburn, Massachusetts. Prior to her current role as president of the CMT, Ms. Dowling was the Director of Operations at the Custom Group. She also spent 8 years in sales, marketing, and accounts receivable at Custom Machine. Since 2015, she has served as Chair of the Mechanical Engineering Technology Department and Technology Business management Department at the Ben Franklin Institute of Technology. Ms. Dowling is a member of Boston Tooling and Machining Education and the President of the Paul J Pasciuto Foundation, which raises money for local schools and communities. Formerly, she was a Board Member of the Massachusetts Association of Private Career Schools and a Board Member of Skills USA. Ms. Dowling was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association and is involved in statewide initiatives designed to promote the advanced manufacturing industry to help ensure a strong workforce pipeline. Ms. Dowling holds a B.A. in English from Merrimack College.

### **Jean Eddy**

Jean Eddy is the president and chief executive officer of American Student Assistance (ASA) where she leads strategic direction and reinvention for the organization. Previously, she served as the chief operating officer at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she reduced their administrative footprint, completed a Campus Master Plan and enhanced IT services for the college. From 2000–2010, she was the Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment at Brandeis University. Prior to that, Ms. Eddy served in multiple roles at Northeastern University and Johnson and Wales University in areas such as Financial Services and Enrollment. She holds a B.S. in Public Administration from Roger Williams College and an M.S. in Computer Science from Johnson and Wales University. She is the Vice Chair of ASA's Board of Directors and serves on the Board of Trustees for the Providence Foundation and the Rhode Island Public

Expenditure Council. Nationally, Ms. Eddy is a recognized speaker and expert on creating net tuition revenue with a focus on recruitment and retention.

### **Joseph Fuller**

Joseph Fuller is a Professor of Management Practice in General Management at Harvard Business School where he co-leads the school's initiative, "Managing the Future of Work." Fuller was a founder of the global consulting firm, Monitor Group, where he served as chief executive officer of the Commercial Consulting Operation from 1996–2006. During his three decades of consulting, Mr. Fuller worked with senior executives and policymakers on a wide variety of issues related to corporate strategy and national competitiveness. He has particularly deep experience in industries with a heavy reliance on technology, including life sciences, ICT and the defense and aerospace industries. Mr. Fuller is the principal author of *Dismissed by Degrees: How degree inflation is undermining U.S. competitiveness and hurting America's middle class*, and principal author of *Bridge the Gap: Rebuilding America's Middle Skills*, which investigates the labor market for jobs requiring more than a high school degree and less than a four-year college education. He is a Director of PVH Corporation and a on the Board of Trustees of Western Governors University. Mr. Fuller graduated from Harvard University and is now a member of the Executive Committee of the Harvard College Fund as well as a former member of Harvard Business School's Board of Dean's Advisors.

### **Christopher Gabrieli**

Christopher Gabrieli is a Partner Emeritus at Bessemer Venture Partners, where he spent 30 years serving multiple roles including Associate, General Partner, Venture Partner and Senior Partner. He remains actively involved in legacy portfolio investments for biotechnical companies such as AVEO Pharmaceuticals, Proteon and Oxagen and medical device companies such as Fractyl and Accuvein. Prior to his career at Bessemer, he co-founded and served as CEO of GMIS, a healthcare software company he helped build, take public and ultimately sell to the leading industry consolidator, McKesson. From 2004–2015, Mr. Gabrieli was a General Partner at the Ironwood Equity Fund and from 2007–2009 he served as the Chairman of the Springfield Finance Control Board. He is the Chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the chief executive officer of Empower Schools, and co-founder of Transforming Education. He is now pursuing another career in non-profit education innovation and is a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He graduated from Harvard College with a B.A. in History and Science and completed two years of the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons M.D. Program.

### **Michael Horn**

Michael Horn is the owner of Horn-Ed LLC and serves as a board member, advisor, and consultant for a portfolio of education organizations. He is also Chief Strategy Officer and Principal Consultant at

Entangled Ventures and Entangled Solutions, where he advises educational technology companies. Mr. Horn is a Co-Founder, Distinguished Fellow, and Board Member at the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation, and previously served as their Executive Director of Education. He also serves as a Venture Partner at Nextgen Venture Partners, and previously served as Director at the Robin Hood Education and Technology Fund. Mr. Horn received his B.A in History from Yale University and his M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. He is a member of the Yale Alumni Fund Class of Agents, and the Harvard Business School Class of 2006 Fund Committee. He currently resides in Lexington, MA.

### **Don Kilburn**

Don Kilburn is an online learning expert with nearly three decades of experience developing innovative, education solutions. He is the chief executive officer of UMass Online, a platform for online courses, certificates, degree programs and educational opportunities through the University of Massachusetts. Previously, he served as the President of AcceleratED, where he managed educational services for corporate tuition assistance programs. He spent 17 years working at Pearson—the largest educational company in the world with 36,000 employees and \$7 billion in revenue—where he was President of Pearson North America, Vice Chairman and CEO of Pearson Higher Education and CEO of Pearson Learning Solutions. Before starting at Pearson, Mr. Kilburn spent over 15 years at Viacom and Xerox. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors at Interactive Data Corporation, which provides financial market data and analytics for traders and investors. He earned his B.A. in Political Science and Government from the College of Wooster in Ohio. He also received Executive Education accolades from the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania, Duke University and INSEAD in Singapore. Mr. Kilburn is a lifelong resident of Massachusetts.

### **Laurie Leshin**

Laurie Leshin is the first female President of Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Prior to joining WPI, Ms. Leshin served as the Dean of the School of Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York where she strengthened interdisciplinary scientific research and education, championed diversity in STEM and significantly expanded fundraising and outreach initiatives. From 2005–2010, Ms. Leshin served as the Deputy Director of NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate, where she was responsible for oversight of NASA's future human spaceflight programs and activities. Ms. Leshin also worked as the Director of Science and Exploration at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Ms. Leshin is a recipient of NASA's Outstanding Leadership Medal, NASA's Distinguished Public Service Medal and the Meteoritical Society's Nier Prize. She has served on the Board of Directors of Women in Aerospace and the Council of the American Geophysical Union. In 2001, the International Astronomical Union named *Asteroid 4922 Leshin* in recognition of her contributions to planetary science. Ms. Leshin received a B.S. in chemistry from Arizona State University and a Ph.D. in geochemistry from the California Institute of Technology. She resides in Worcester with her husband, Dr. Jon Morse.

## **Michael London**

Michael London is the founding president and chief executive officer of Examity, the world leader in ID Verification and Online Proctoring. Previously, he was the founding chief executive officer for an education startup, Bloomberg Institute, where he helped the Bloomberg Aptitude Test grow to more than 600 universities in 70 countries. Mr. London also previously served as Vice President for Kaplan and was co-founder and chief executive officer of College Coach and EdAssist. Mr. London is a board member at Babson College and co-author of *The New Rules of College Admission*. He received his B.S. from Babson College and his M.B.A. from Boston University Questrom School of Business.

## **Patricia Meservey**

Patricia Meservey is the President Emerita of Salem State University. She served as president of the University from 2007–2017. Previously, she was Provost and Academic Vice President at Suffolk University and a professor at the Northeastern University Bouvé College of Health Sciences. She currently sits on the Boards of Bottom Line, Eastern Bank and Essex County Community Foundation, and is the Director of the Legal Sea Foods Board. She was an honorary co-chair for the Salem Award Foundation for Human Rights and Social Justice. Dr. Meservey holds a nursing license in Massachusetts, and was a staff nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital, St. Margaret's Hospital and Beth Israel Hospital. Dr. Meservey earned both her B.S. in Nursing and M.S. in Parent-Child Health Nursing from Boston University, and her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Boston College.

## **Oswald Mondejar**

Oswald "Oz" Mondejar is the Senior Vice President of Mission and Advocacy for Partners Continuing Care, Inc., the non-acute care services division of Partners HealthCare. He is responsible for mission integration and administrative operations across the Human Resources, Marketing Communications and Community Relations Divisions. Previously, he led the New England Region recruitment program for the Social Security Administration, and served as a Human Resources Executive in industries including manufacturing, hospitality and finance. He received the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Employment Leadership Award, and the White House Champion of Change Award. In 2015, he was one of only seventeen experts nationally selected for a two-year term by U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez to serve on the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment. Mr. Mondejar earned his B.A. in Human Resources from Lesley University.

## **Reinier Moquete**

Reinier Moquete is the chief executive officer of Advooq Technology Group, the founder of Diversity IT Network as well as CyberWarrior Academy, and is the co-founder and board president of the Latino STEM Alliance. Mr. Moquete is active in initiatives including the Latino Legacy Fund at the Boston Foundation,



the My Brother's Keeper Advisory Committee and Tech Hire Boston at the Boston Private Industry Council. He previously served on the Massachusetts Governor's STEM Advisory Council, was a board fellow for KIPP Massachusetts, and was the Boston chapter president for the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. He holds an A.A. in Business and an A.S. in Finance from Bunker Hill Community College, as well as a B.S. in Telecommunications from Pace University. Mr. Moquete lives in the Greater Boston area with his wife, Ylira Pimentel-Moquete, and their three children.

### **Marjorie Ringrose**

Marjorie Ringrose is a senior program officer of education at the Smith Family Foundation, where she is working to re-engineer the Foundation's long-term education strategy toward post-secondary outcomes for traditional age and older students who are underrepresented in higher education. Previously, she served as executive director of Social Venture Partners (SVP). Under her leadership, SVP grew nearly ten-fold and brought millions of dollars and thousands of hours of skilled pro bono counsel to Boston's most promising nonprofits. She also worked as the director of recruiting, training, and professional development at Cambridge Strategic Management Group—now, Cartesian, Inc. She was also the founding President of Communication Arts Network, where she facilitated over 200 multi-day training workshops for thousands of Fortune 100 companies. Ms. Ringrose is on the Board of Directors of the Boston Children's Chorus and Third Sector New England, and she co-chairs Boston Education Funders. She holds a B.S. in Economics from Trinity University as well as a M.Sc. and Ph.D. from the London School of Economics. Ms. Ringrose resides in Charlestown, Massachusetts with her husband and three children.

### **Christina Royal**

Dr. Christina Royal currently serves as the president of Holyoke Community College. She has been involved in education for over 20 years, in both academic and corporate environments. Previously, she was the provost and vice president of academic affairs at Inver Hills Community College, one of 37 institutions in the Minnesota state colleges and universities system. Prior to Inver Hills, Dr. Royal served as the associate vice president of eLearning and innovation at Cuyahoga Community College with district-wide oversight of the largest distance learning programs in the State of Ohio. Dr. Royal previously served as a member of the Board of Directors at the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and at Open Door, the largest non-profit food shelf in Dakota County, Minnesota. She holds a B.A. in mathematics and a M.A. in educational psychology from Marist College, as well as a Ph.D. in instructional design for online learning from Capella University.

### **Sanjay Sarma**

Sanjay Sarma is the vice president for Open Learning at MIT. He also leads the Office of Digital Learning, which oversees MIT OpenCourseWare and supports the development and use of digital technology for

on-campus teaching and massive open online courses (MOOCs). A co-founder of the Auto-ID Center at MIT, Dr. Sarma developed many of the key technologies behind the EPC suite of RFID standards now used worldwide. Previously, he was the founder and chief technology officer of OATSystems, which was acquired by Checkpoint Systems in 2008. He has also worked at Schlumberger Oilfield Services in Aberdeen, United Kingdom, and at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories in Berkeley, California. Currently, Dr. Sarma serves on the Boards of GSI, EPCglobal and edX, the not-for-profit company set up by MIT and Harvard to create and promulgate an open-source platform for the distribution of free online education worldwide. Author of more than 75 academic papers in computational geometry, sensing, RFID, automation, and CAD, Dr. Sarma is the recipient of numerous awards for teaching and research, including the MacVicar Fellowship, the Business Week eBiz Award, and InformationWeek's Innovators and Influencers Award. He holds a B.S. from the Indian Institute of Technology, an M.E. in Design from Carnegie Mellon University and a Ph.D. in Automation from the University of California at Berkeley.

### **Mary Sarris**

Mary Sarris is executive director of the North Shore Workforce Investment Board, where she leads and manages the board of directors who set policy for workforce development in the North Shore region. Previous to her current role, she worked at the Greater Lowell and North Shore Regional Employment Boards as director of education policy and school to work initiatives. Ms. Sarris is a member of the board of trustees for the North Shore Community College Foundation, the board of directors for the North Shore Technology Council, and the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board Association. She received her B.A. in political science from Assumption College, her M.P.A. from Suffolk University and a certificate of special studies in administration and management from Harvard University. Ms. Sarris currently resides in Lynn, MA.

### **Michelle Weise**

Michelle Weise is the senior vice president for workforce strategies and chief innovation officer at Strada Education Network, a national nonprofit dedicated to improving lives by strengthening the pathways between education and employment. Dr. Weise previously served as chief innovation officer at Sandbox CollABorative at Southern New Hampshire University. She was a senior research fellow for higher education at Clayton Christensen Institute and was the vice president of academic affairs at Fidelis. Dr. Weise also taught in the English departments for both Stanford University and Skidmore College. She serves on the Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is on the advisory board of Village Capital. She is also a columnist for EdSurge and has had her commentaries and research featured in *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *The Boston Globe*, and *PBS Newshour*. Dr. Weise received her A.B. in literature from Harvard University, and both her M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Stanford University.

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